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# HOUSING NEWS

★ KEEPING HOUSING ISSUES IN THE FOREFRONT ★

## VIRGINIA FINDS HER WAY

*Editor's note: We don't talk a lot about Shelter Plus Care in this newsletter, but it is, in fact, at the core of what DMH Housing does. Shelter Plus Care is bureaucracy, accounting, and a mountain of paper, but more than anything it's the people we serve. This is a story of one of those people.*

Walking into Virginia's apartment, the first thing one notices is how neat her modest apartment is. Her living room is surrounded by pictures of her 2 year old son, Quintin. Virginia is focusing on the present and living into a future of possibility and growth, because of the rental assistance and support services provided by the DMH Shelter Plus Care program.

For 13 years, Virginia lived "on the streets", as she puts it: homeless and living a losing battle when it came to her addiction to crack. She became a prostitute in order to support her drug habit. Her parental rights were permanently severed for her three children. Nothing—not even her fear for her own safety and the loss of her children—got in the way of feeding her addiction.

Virginia received assistance from Shelter Plus Care but lost her housing due to a relapse and her refusal to re-enter treatment. She became homeless once again. This was a pattern for her, cycling in and out of treatment but never being able to maintain her sobriety.



"I had nowhere to go. My family wanted nothing to do with me. I had burned all my bridges."

A little over two years ago, Virginia found out she was pregnant. This pregnancy was different somehow. Once she heard her son's heartbeat she found strength within her that she had assumed had died long ago. She stopped using drugs and reconnected with services and re-entered substance abuse treatment. After her treatment she entered a supported housing program at Healing House which is dedicated to women in recovery with children who are clean and sober.

Virginia is maintaining her sobriety with her continued involvement in substance abuse after care programs and with the Shelter Plus Care rental assistance and support services from her housing provider. Virginia is building a stable life and getting back on her feet.



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Virginia is currently employed at a nursing home and is working on her GED. Her goal is to go to college and get a degree in social work and work in the substance abuse field or with women on the streets. She hopes she can help people by using her own experiences. "I know what they are going through. I have been in that lifestyle." She wants to be an example to show them that there is a way out.

Virginia now knows there are no quick fixes. And she keeps building a future for herself and Quintin—step-by-step. "It sure amazes me how much I have accomplished on my own, clean and sober. When I put the key in the door of my apartment, I know it's mine. I am paying my way with help for now, but I will be on my own soon and that feels so good." 🏠

Homeless veterans and those who help them received a significant boost in their efforts when the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) made 55 new awards to public and private nonprofit organizations that assist homeless veterans.

Among the new grantees is the Missouri Department of Mental Health, which has partnered with St. Patrick's Center and Queen of Peace Center in St. Louis to provide transitional housing with an extensive list of support services to 50 veterans at two locations in the city.

"It's important that VA continue to help our nation's homeless veterans, many of whom are still

### *Timeline to Apply for Balance of State HUD Homeless Funds*

**August 7-8:** MHDC and the Governor's Committee to End Homelessness will conduct training on how to apply for HUD Homeless Funding within the Balance of State (BOS) Continuum of Care, at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City. *This training is mandatory if your agency wishes to submit an application.*

**August 22:** Applications for BOS Continuum funding are due to MHDC by 4:30 PM.

**August 26-27:** Governor's Committee to End Homelessness (GCEH) does pre-review of all applications for eligibility and budgets. Applicants will need to be available by phone on these dates to provide further information.

**September 2-3:** GCEH does formal scoring and ranking of applications in preparation for submission of Exhibit 1 to HUD.

**September 5 and after:** Applicants will be notified if their application was ranked and included in the BOS submission to HUD.



dealing with the effects of past conflicts," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "These awards provide needed resources to hard working, caring and compassionate people who provide one-on-one care and services to our veterans every day in their own communities."




The awards to 55 community-based organizations in 24 states will add over 1,000 transitional housing beds to the 9,400 beds already available for homeless veterans because of VA grants for the homeless.

VA has the largest integrated network of homeless assistance programs in the country. It is the only federal agency that provides substantial one-on-one contact with the homeless. In many cities and rural areas, VA social workers and other clinicians conduct extensive outreach programs, clinical assessments, medical treatment, alcohol and drug abuse counseling and employment assistance.



Last year, VA committed more resources than at any time in its history for programs benefiting homeless veterans. The Department committed \$26 million in new funding to support about 2,000 new transitional housing beds, \$12 million for seriously mentally ill veterans, terminally ill veterans, frail elderly veterans and women veterans, to include women with children, and \$2 million for other programs.

VA has provided more than \$350 million in grants and per diem payments since it initiated the Grant and Per Diem Program in 1994.

For more information on VA's homeless programs, see <http://www.va.gov/homeless/>. You can also visit the VA website at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) or contact VA's Homeless Veterans Programs Office at (202) 461-7401, or e-mail VA at [homelessvets@mail.va.gov](mailto:homelessvets@mail.va.gov). 

### St. Louis DMH Housing Staff Explores Homeless Services Community in Cleveland

An invitation was extended to Judy Johnson, DMH Affordable Housing Consultant, by Enterprise Community Partners, Inc. to join a prestigious group of Continuum of Care participants for a trip to Cleveland. The Cleveland trip was sponsored by Enterprise Community Partners, Inc. for the group to see the different homeless permanent housing programs in Cleveland. This trip gave Judy a chance to see how

homeless programs are operated outside of St. Louis.


The St. Louis crew hit the ground running in Cleveland. Pam Coaxum with Enterprise set up meetings with homeless providers in the Cleveland area to share how homelessness is handled in their area. Judy was impressed by the fact that there are no unmet shelter needs in Cleveland—no one who needs emergency shelter is turned away.



Another impressive point were the signs located in Downtown Cleveland. The signs state, "Instead of donating to a panhandler, give to the homeless fund." That's an avenue in which everyone—homeless, businesses, communities—benefits.

Judy inquired about Shelter Plus Care in Cleveland. Cleveland's Shelter Plus Care Program is operated with their SHP (Supportive Housing Program) and is open to all agencies with no Wait List. The Cleveland providers were interested in the processing structure used by the Missouri Department of Mental

Health for its Shelter Plus Care grants.

This trip was a meeting of the minds. Everyone walked away with something useful and valuable.—Judy Johnson 

### Funding News

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### Staples Foundation for Learning Offers Support for Education and Job Skills Programs

**Deadline: October 24, 2008**

The mission of the Staples Foundation for Learning, Inc., is "to teach, train, and inspire." The foundation contributes funds to national and local charities that provide educational opportunities and job skills for all people, with a special emphasis on disadvantaged youth.

To be eligible for consideration, the applicant organizations must have tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and align with the Staples Foundation for Learning's mission and focus on job skills and education.

The requested amount of each grant can be up to \$25,000. Most grants awarded by the foundation are in the \$5,000 to \$25,000 range.

Grant decisions will be made three times a year. The proposal deadlines currently scheduled are May 2008 Decision -- proposals must be submitted





between February 29 and March 14, 2008; September 2008 Decision -- proposals must be submitted between June 2 and June 16, 2008. Organizations are eligible to apply for a grant once every twelve months.

Visit the Staples Foundation's Web site for complete program information and instructions on submitting an online application.

**Link:**  
[www.staplesfoundation.org/](http://www.staplesfoundation.org/)



### **Home Depot Announces Housing Impact Grants Program**

**Deadlines: September 15, 2008, and December 15, 2008**

Home Depot (<http://corporate.homedepot.com/wps/portal/>) has aligned its online grants program with the Home Depot Foundation's (<http://homedepotfoundation.org/>) Affordable Housing Built Responsibly program and will focus exclusively on housing.

The Home Depot Housing Impact Grants program supports affordable housing projects built or preserved with environmentally friendly, efficient, and durable materials that increase energy and water efficiency, improve indoor air quality, and reduce maintenance costs. The grant program supports 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organizations in the United States and organizations with registered status in Canada.

Grants range between \$500 and \$3,000 each. Preference will be given to requests that engage community stakeholders and result in building or rebuilding houses and/or apartments that are affordable to individuals/families earning a modest income (typically 80 percent or less of the area median income).

Applicants who pass the program's online Eligibility Quiz must then complete and submit the entire application in order to be considered for a grant. The 2008 Housing Impact Grant Program will accept applications according to the following schedule: August 1 to September 15, 2008; and November 1 to December 15, 2008. In order to be considered during a grant cycle, the application must be completed and submitted prior to the application deadline.

Visit the Home Depot Web site for complete program information and application procedures.




### **Grants Available for Families Struggling with Child Health-Related Expenses**

#### **Deadline: Open**

The United Healthcare Children's Foundation (<http://uhccf.org/>) has announced that new grants are available to help children who need critical health care treatment, services, or equipment not covered or not fully covered by their parents' health benefit plans.

UHCCF provides grants to families to help pay for child health care services such as speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy sessions, prescriptions, and medical equipment such as wheelchairs, orthotics, and eyeglasses.

Parents and legal guardians may apply for grants of up to \$5,000 each for child medical services and equipment by completing an online application at the UHCCF Web site.

To be eligible for a grant, children must be 16 years of age or younger. Families must meet economic guidelines, reside in the United States, and be covered by a commercial health benefit plan. 

### **Weathering the High Cost of Heating Your Home This Winter**

Nearly all of us see the volatility of gasoline prices at the pump every day. However, many people are not aware of the effect of high crude oil prices on another aspect of energy consumption: home heating costs. Summer energy costs can be burdensome too, but the difference between summer and winter costs is that cooling is powered mostly by electricity, which in Missouri is generated primarily by coal and nuclear power and not highly tied to crude oil prices. Winter heating comes mostly from natural gas, propane and home heating oil, all of which are tied to the price of crude oil.





Missouri households who rely on propane and natural gas to stay warm in the winter have especially seen consistent rises in the costs for these fuels the past few years, and Missouri state energy officials have warned that for the winter of 2008-09, the cost of propane and natural gas for home heating could be 20%-30% higher than last year. Such price increases threaten to impose major hardships on both low income and middle income households.

In times of hot and cold weather, energy consumption becomes the second largest monthly bill for most households after paying rent or a mortgage. The best way to prepare for increased costs and to avoid economic hardship is to be forewarned and to be prepared to take practical steps.

### Winter Energy Savings

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provides extensive information on cold weather energy savings at its [web site](#), including a full list of statewide energy

assistance programs. DNR recommends:

- Set your thermostat as low as it is comfortable. Each degree you lower your thermostat can cut your heating costs between one and three percent. A common strategy is to lower thermostat settings to 68 degrees. The lower you set it, the more you'll save.
- Turn your thermostat down 10 to 15 degrees during your sleeping hours or while you're away, to save even more on your heating bill.



- Use a programmable thermostat with your furnace to adjust the setting while you sleep or no one is home.
- Clean or replace filters on furnaces once a month, or as needed.
- Clean warm-air registers, baseboard heaters, and radiators as needed; make sure they're not blocked by furniture, carpeting, or drapes.
- Place heat-resistant radiator reflectors between exterior walls and the radiators.
- Bleed trapped air from hot-water radiators once or

twice a season. If in doubt about how to perform this task, call a professional.

- Caulking and weather stripping keeps warm air in during the winter.
- Add insulation around heat ducts when they are located in unconditioned spaces such as attics, crawl spaces, and garages.
- If you see holes or separated joints in your ducts, hire a professional to repair them.
- Check to see that your fireplace damper is tightly closed, when it is not in use.
- During the heating season, keep draperies and shades on south-facing windows open during the day to allow sunlight to enter your home, and close them at night to reduce the chill from cold windows.

### Summer Energy Savings

- Set your thermostat as high as comfortably possible. The less difference between the indoor and outdoor temperatures, the lower your overall cooling bill will be.
- Use a programmable thermostat with your air



conditioner to adjust the setting at night or when no one is home.

- Use a fan with your window air conditioner to spread cool air effectively through your home without greatly increasing power use.
- Don't set your thermostat at a colder setting than normal when you turn on your air conditioner. It won't cool your home any faster, and could result in excessive cooling and unnecessary expense.



- Don't place lamps or TVs near your air conditioner's thermostat. The heat from these appliances will cause the air conditioner to run longer.
- Close curtains on south- and west-facing windows during the day.
- Install white window shades, drapes, or blinds to reflect heat away from the house.
- Apply sun-control or other reflective films on south-facing windows.
- Caulking and weather stripping will keep cool air in during the summer.
- Add insulation around air conditioning ducts when

they are located in unconditioned spaces such as attics, crawl spaces, and garages.


- If you see holes or separated joints in your ducts, hire a professional to repair them.
- Check to see that your fireplace damper is tightly closed.

The U.S. Department of Energy has a [consumer-friendly web site](#) dealing with energy efficiency and renewable energy. The site has a wide variety of information for renters, homeowners and business owners on how to save energy and how to use energy more efficiently.

Also of interest are several [publications](#) from the federal Energy Information Administration ([www.eia.doe.gov](http://www.eia.doe.gov)) explaining the primary forms of energy used to heat and cool your home and what causes their prices to fluctuate: [Propane Prices—What Consumers Should Know](#)

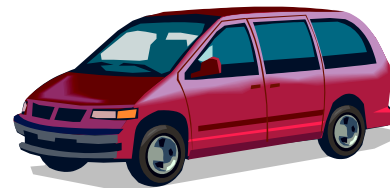
[Residential Electricity Prices—A Consumer's Guide](#)

[Residential Heating Oil Prices—What Consumers Should Know](#)

[Residential Natural Gas Prices—What Consumers Should Know](#) 

## Non-Emergency Medical Transport Made Available by MO HealthNet

Effective June 9, 2008, the Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) program became available to use as an option to assist clients enrolled in the Community Psychiatric Rehabilitation (CPR) program in accessing their Medication Services appointments with their physician or advance practice nurse who is managing and prescribing their psychiatric medications.



The Department of Mental Health (DMH) has obtained funding and worked closely with the MO HealthNet Division to make this option available for enrolled CPR clients who have no other way to get to their Medication Services appointment. The purpose of the NEMT program is to assure transportation for MO HealthNet eligible participants who do not have access to free appropriate transportation to and from scheduled MO HealthNet covered services.

Potential users of this service should know the following:

1. The NEMT broker is LogistiCare Solutions. Requests for non-emergency medical transportation may be made by calling LogistiCare at 1-866-



269-5927 at least three (3) business days in advance of the scheduled appointment. Appointments requiring less than three (3) days notice are considered urgent and require verification from the healthcare provider. Urgent requests may be made 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The following information must be provided at the time of the call:

- The clients name, pick up address, phone number, and MO HealthNet number (DCN);
- The name, address, and phone number of the healthcare provider;
- The date and time of the appointment;
- any special needs of the client (such as needing a wheelchair, etc.);
- if the client is under 21, whether the client needs an attendant or parent to accompany them.

2. The only CPR service being added for NEMT assistance is CPR Medication Services. CPR Psychosocial Rehabilitation is the only CPR service not eligible for NEMT assistance.

3. The client must be MO HealthNet eligible on the date of the transport.

Please contact Tom Rehak at DMH by [email](#) or at 573-751-8124 for further information.



### DSS Holding Town Meetings on Medicaid Transition

The Missouri Department of Social Services, MO HealthNet Division is conducting a series of town hall meetings throughout the state to discuss the transition from Medicaid to MO HealthNet and gather public input on the promotion of patient-centered health care homes. Meetings have already been held in July in St. Louis County and City, West Plains and Sedalia. The remaining meetings are scheduled as follows:



**Aug 07, 2008** - 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. - Columbia Public Library, Friends Room, 100 W. Broadway, Columbia, MO

**Aug 12, 2008** - 4:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. - Truman High School Lecture Hall 3301 S. Noland Road, Independence, MO

**Aug 13, 2008** - 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. - Bruce Watkins Culture Center, 3700 Blue Parkway, Kansas City, MO

**Aug 20, 2008** - 1:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m. - FSD County Office, 10325 Highway 21, Hillsboro, MO

**Aug 27, 2008** - 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. -FSD County Office, 1100 Highway 25 S Bypass Suite 1, Kennett, MO

**Aug 28, 2008** - 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. - Cape Girardeau FSD, 220 N. Fountain, Cape Girardeau, MO

For a [complete calendar of DSS events](#), visit their web site. For further information about the town hall meetings, email [ask.mhd@dss.mo.gov](mailto:ask.mhd@dss.mo.gov) or call 573-751-3425.

### Governor's Committee to End Homelessness Regional Housing Meetings Schedule for September 2008

[Staff from the Missouri Housing Development Commission](#) will continue to facilitate regional housing meetings around the state. Attending one of these meetings is a great way to generate public discussion about housing and homelessness needs in your local area. As of July 29<sup>th</sup>, the meeting locations for Poplar Bluff and Kirksville had not been finalized. If you want to attend one of these meetings, please contact Heather Bradley-Geary at MHDC at 816-759-7201 for further information. Below is the meeting schedule for September 2008:





## Regional Housing Meetings September 2008

Date	Time	Location
9/9/08	9-11am	NECAC 917 Broadway Hannibal
6/9/08	2-4pm	Location to be determined Kirkville
9/10/08	9-11am	Green Hills Community Action, 1506 Oklahoma Ave Trenton
9/10/08	2-4pm	Community Services, Inc. 1212 S. Main Maryville
9/11/08	9-11am	Pettis Co. Community Partnership 515 S. Kentucky Sedalia
9/15/08	11:30am- 1:30pm	Church Army 501 S. 6th St. Branson
9/15/08	3:30- 5:30pm	Ozark Action 720 E. Main West Plains
9/16/08	9-11am	Location to be determined Poplar Bluff
9/16/08	2-4pm	DAEOC 99 Skyview Rd Portageville
9/17/08	9-11am	Community Counseling Center 402 S. Silver Springs Road Cape Girardeau
9/18/08	9-11am	MASW 606 E. Capitol Jefferson City

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